

STATEMENT OF DONALD W. MURPHY, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION AND PUBLIC LANDS, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 3638, TO ADJUST THE BOUNDARY OF REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

April 29, 2004

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 3638, a bill to adjust the boundary of Redwood National Park in the State of California.

The Department supports enactment of H.R. 3638. This legislation would enable the National Park Service and the California Department of Parks and Recreation to manage a large swath of state-owned redwood forest land, known as the Mill Creek property, under the same terms that state park lands currently within the boundary of Redwood National Park are managed. It would thus provide for more efficient and cost-effective management and protection of a very ecologically important resource in the coastal redwood region of northern California. There would be no Federal costs for land acquisition or development resulting from this legislation, and only negligible operation and maintenance costs.

H.R. 3638 would revise the boundary of Redwood National Park and increase the park's acreage limitation from 106,000 acres to 133,000 acres to accommodate the addition of the 25,500-acre Mill Creek property and about 900 acres of state park lands that have been acquired since the last park boundary adjustment was enacted in 1978. The Mill

Creek property consists of the watersheds of Mill Creek and Rock Creek, tributaries to the Smith River, and is contiguous to the Redwood National Park boundary. This property has been studied and proposed for park status since the early 1900's, most recently in the 1960's as the heart of an early proposal to establish Redwood National Park. Coast redwoods comprise almost 95 percent of the forest type on the property. The land includes about 121 acres of ancient redwood forest, and contains 23 species that are endangered, threatened, or of special concern. Mill Creek supports the most significant run of Coho salmon in the entire Smith River watershed and has been identified as critical to the recovery of the species.

The Mill Creek property was purchased by the Save-the-Redwoods League for \$60 million from the Stimson Lumber Company, which was phasing out logging operations on the property and wanted to sell the land. Funding for the purchase came from a variety of state and private sources. The land became part of the California state park system in June, 2002, and is being managed under an interim plan pending action by Congress to add the property to Redwood National Park.

If the Mill Creek property is included within the boundary of Redwood National Park, it will be managed under the same cooperative management agreement that the National Park Service and the California Department of Parks and Recreation currently use to manage the National Park Service property and the three state parks within the boundary. The joint Federal-state management arrangement at Redwood is unusual within the

National Park System, but has come to serve as a model of interagency cooperative management efforts.

The Federal-state management arrangement at Redwood stems from the origins of the park. The 1968 legislation that established Redwood National Park and the 1978 legislation that expanded it included three existing state parks within the boundary in anticipation of eventual conveyance from the state to the National Park Service. For a variety of reasons, that conveyance did not occur. The state parks currently own about 32 percent of the land within the Redwood National Park boundary, and about half the acreage of the ancient redwood forest in the park. In the 1990's, after years of experiencing duplication of efforts and management conflicts, the National Park Service and the California Department of Parks and Recreation established a framework for cooperative management of the Federal and state parks. Congress facilitated this effort by providing authority for the National Park Service to enter into a cooperative management agreement for the Redwood parks with the state agency—and, incidentally, has since extended that authority to all units of the National Park System due in large part to the success of the arrangement at Redwood.

The Federal-state cooperative management agreement at Redwood National Park allows the two park agencies to operate the entire 105,000-acre area in a unified manner. In a reflection of that unity, while “Redwood National Park” remains the legal name for the park, the name of the site that is used for public information purposes is “Redwood National and State Parks.” The management decisions of both agencies are guided by a

joint General Management Plan, adopted in 2000. The two agencies share staff, equipment, and facilities to fulfill common resource protection and visitor service goals. They develop common procedures for activities such as issuing special use permits, and common programs for park operations such as staff training and media relations. They develop and implement schedules so that the two agencies cover for each other and avoid duplication. Both agencies benefit from efficiencies in the areas of law enforcement, interpretation, administration, resource management and maintenance. Facilities and space on the new parcel will increase these efficiencies by providing centralized staging areas, storage space and offices for these joint operations.

Adding the Mill Creek property to the boundary of Redwood National Park, as H.R. 3638 would do, would enable the National Park Service and the California Department of Parks and Recreation to extend all the benefits of the cooperative management agreement to that property, as well. The result would be the more efficient and effective management and protection of land that provides a critically important contribution to the ecological values that the National Park Service protects at Redwood National Park.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have.